

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

5

1-20. (Previously Canceled)

21. (Previously Presented) A metal sterilization container for sterilizing items in a gas plasma sterilization medium, the container comprising:

10

an aluminum lid having a first set of vent holes;

an aluminum bottom having a second set of vent holes, the aluminum bottom attachable to the aluminum lid;

a first and second filter medium, permeable to the flow of gas plasma, respectively associated with the first and second set of vent holes; and

15

an anodic coating substantially applied to the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom, the anodic coating having a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.5 mils(0.0005 inches).

22. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the aluminum comprises 6061 T6.

20

23. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

25

24. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially not ~~exceeding~~ below 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches).

30

25. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).

26. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.2 mils (0.0002 inches) and 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).
- 5 27. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the anodic coating comprises a thickness substantially between 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches) and 0.3 mils (0.0003 inches).
- 10 28. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the first set of vent holes and the second set of vent holes are offset from each other.
29. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a first gasket attachable between the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom.
- 15 30. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a first filter retainer plate attachable to the aluminum lid, the first filter retainer plate having a set of vent holes substantially offset relative to the first set of vent holes.
- 20 31. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the first filter medium and the first retainer plate are is substantially affixed to the aluminum lid with a gap between the ~~filter medium and the~~ aluminum lid and the first filter retention plate in the region of the vent holes.
- 25 32. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim ~~73~~ 21, wherein the second filter medium and second retainer plate are is substantially affixed to the aluminum bottom with a gap between ~~the second filter medium and the~~ aluminum bottom and the second retention plate in the region of the second set of vent holes.
- 30 33. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a second gasket ~~attachable between the aluminum lid and the first filter medium~~ attached to said first retainer plate positioned to create a seal with said lid when in a sealing position.

34. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim ~~33~~ 21 comprising one or more gaskets ~~wherein the gasket comprises silicone.~~

5 35. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim ~~33~~ 21 wherein the gasket comprises ~~neoprene~~ 34 wherein each gasket is independently selected from the group consisting of silicone, neoprene, Teflon and mixtures thereof.

10 36. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a third gasket ~~attachable between the aluminum bottom and the second filter medium attached to said second retainer plate positioned to create a seal with said bottom~~ when in a sealing position.

Cancel claims 37-38.

15 39. (Currently Amended) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein ~~the each~~ filter medium independently comprises a member selected from the group consisting of paper, Teflon, porous stainless steel, polysulfone, hydrophobic material, and mixtures thereof.

20 40. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a third set of vent holes substantially located in the aluminum bottom.

25 41. (Previously Presented) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, wherein the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom are substantially electrically insulated from each other.

42. (Currently Amended) A system for sterilizing items in a container with a gas plasma, the system comprising:

30 means for introducing gas plasma; and

the container of claim 21 ~~an aluminum lid having a first set of vent~~
holes;

~~an aluminum bottom having a second set of vent holes, the aluminum bottom attachable to the aluminum lid;~~

~~a first and second filter medium, permeable to the flow of gas plasma, respectively associated with the first and second set of vent holes; and~~

5 ~~an anodic coating substantially applied to the aluminum lid and the aluminum bottom, the anodic coating having a thickness substantially not exceeding 0.5 mils(0.0005 inches).~~

Cancel claims 43-54

10 55. (Previously Presented). A method for sterilizing instruments in a metal container having a lid and a bottom, the lid having a first set of vent holes and a first filter medium, the bottom having a second set of vent holes and a second filter medium, the method comprising the steps of:

placing at least one instrument in the metal container;

15 passing a gas plasma sterilization medium through the first set of vent holes and the first filter medium;

causing the gas plasma sterilization medium to turbulently flow within the metal container;

20 substantially restricting the electrical current between the lid and the bottom, wherein the lid and bottom comprise an anodization layer with a thickness not greater than 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches); and

passing the gas plasma sterilization medium through the second set of vent holes and the second filter medium.

25 Cancel claims 56-63.

64. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing an aluminum sterilization container having a lid and a bottom, the method comprising the steps of:

forming a first set of vent holes in the lid;

30 forming a second set of vent holes in the bottom; and

applying a substantially uniform anodic coating to the lid and the bottom, the anodic coating having a thickness no greater than 0.5 mils (0.0005 inches).

Cancel claims 65-72

5 73. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 21, further comprising a second filter retainer plate attachable to the aluminum bottom, the filter retainer plate having a set of vent holes substantially offset relative to the second set of vent holes.

74. (New) The metal sterilization container of claim 39, wherein said hydrophobic material is a polyethylene/polypropylene.